

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~A method of addressing problems associated with customer orders,~~ comprising:

one or more processors; and

a memory coupled to the processors comprising instructions executable by the processors, the processors operable when executing the instructions to:

monitor a workflow process to detect one or more exceptions that disrupt completion of one or more purchasing transactions between transactional parties;

determine whether the detected exceptions correspond to a first type, a second type or a third type according to characteristics of the detected exceptions;

when the detected exceptions correspond to the first type, automatically resolve the disruption without communicating with the transactional parties;

when the detected exceptions correspond to the second type, cause an outbound communication to be sent to a purchasing one of the transactional parties proactively and independently of whether the purchasing transactional party has reported the disruption, the outbound communication indicating a plurality of selectable proposed solutions to the detected exceptions; and

when the detected exceptions correspond to the third type, establish a real time collaboration session between the transactional parties proactively and independently of whether the transactional parties have reported the disruption.

~~receiving an order for delivery of a product placed by a customer;~~

~~initiating a workflow process to handle delivery of product of the order to the customer;~~

~~monitoring the workflow process to detect any problems related to the delivery of the order;~~

~~notifying a human call-center agent when a problem related to delivery of the product to the customer occurs during the processing of the order; and~~

~~before resolving the problem, proactively establishing a telephonic interaction between said human call-center agent and the customer when the problem occurs to resolve the problem based at least in part on input of the customer.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the processors are further operable to:
access a database to determine an authorization level associated with the disrupted purchasing transactions when the detected exceptions correspond to the second type;
identify a queue used by representatives of a call center, the queue listing entries for other exceptions to be resolved by the call center; and
compare the determined authorization level to the entries in the queue to determine a relative position in the queue for inserting a new entry that includes instructions for performing the outbound communication, background information corresponding to the disrupted purchasing transactions and contact information for the purchasing transactional party ~~The method of Claim 1 further comprising automatically fixing the problem and informing the customer of the problem and the solution before being contacted by the customer.~~

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the processors are further operable to cause a software agent to send the outbound communication proactively and independently of whether the purchasing transactional party has reported the disruption ~~The method of Claim 1 further comprising researching the problem, explaining the problem to the customer, and proposing a solution to the customer before being contacted by the customer.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the processors are further operable to:
format a list of call center representatives identified in a Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) directory;
rank the formatted list according to an analysis of the detected exceptions; and
select a target one of the call center representatives to initiate the outbound communication, the selection occurring according to both the ranking and different availability status indications for the call center representatives ~~The method of Claim 1~~

~~further comprising establishing a collaboration session between representatives of the customer and the seller to resolve the problem.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the processors are further operable to select a medium to be used for transfer of the outbound communication according to characteristics of the disrupted purchasing transaction ~~The method of Claim 1, wherein the order is placed on-line.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the processors are further operable to send one or more signals to an endpoint associated with a selected call center representative, the signals causing establishment of an interactive communication session between the selected call center representative responsive to activation of a single button associated with the selected call center representative ~~The method of Claim 1, wherein the order is placed via a B2B-exchange or B2B-enterprise resource planning.~~

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) ~~A proactive call-center system comprising:~~
means for detecting one or more exceptions that disrupt completion of one or more purchasing transactions between transactional parties;
means for automatically determining whether resolution of the detected exceptions requires a query response from one or both the transactional parties;
means for triggering establishment of a communication session with one or both of the parties when the resolution requires the query response, the communication session initiated remotely with respect to one or more endpoints corresponding to a purchasing one of the transactional parties and initiated proactively and independently of whether the purchasing transactional party has reported the disruption; and

means for resolving the detected exceptions according to the query response received over the communication session.

~~means for receiving an order for delivery of a product placed by a customer;~~

~~means for initiating a workflow process to handle delivery of the product of the order;~~

~~means for monitoring the workflow process to detect any problems related to the delivery of the order;~~

~~means for notifying a human call center agent when a problem related to the delivery of the product to the customer occurs during the processing of the order; and~~

~~means for proactively establishing a telephonic interaction between said human call center agent and the customer before resolving the problem when the problem occurs to resolve the problem based at least in part on input of the customer.~~

11. (Currently Amended) The ~~proactive call center~~ system of Claim 10 further comprising:

means for providing product configuration web pages, the web pages presenting different selectable conditions relating to product ordering and including at least a price selection, a feature selection and a ship date selection;

means for identifying a combination of selected conditions originating from the endpoints that correspond to the purchasing transactional party and specifying a proposed product that is unavailable for final transaction at a time that the combination is identified;

means for regularly and continuously comparing the identified combination that represents the proposed product to a database indicating available inventory; and

means for initiating the purchasing transactions remotely with respect to the endpoints associated with the purchasing transactional party.

~~means for automatically fixing the problem and informing the customer of the problem and the solution before being contacted by the customer.~~

12. (Currently Amended) The ~~proactive call center~~ of Claim 10 further comprising means for sending a computer generated voice message to the purchasing transactional party to elicit the query response researching the problem, explaining the problem to the customer, and proposing a solution to the customer before being contacted by the customer.

13. (Currently Amended) The ~~proactive call center~~ of Claim 10 further comprising means for automatically resolving the detected exceptions without triggering the communication session when the detected exceptions do not require the query response establishing a collaboration session between representatives of the customer and the seller to resolve the problem.

14. (Currently Amended) The ~~proactive call center~~ system of Claim 10, wherein the purchasing transactions are initiated using one or more web pages ~~order is placed on-line.~~

15. (Currently Amended) The ~~proactive call center~~ system of Claim 10, wherein the system is coupled to a Business to Business (B2B) exchange ~~order is placed via a B2B exchange or B2B enterprise resource planning.~~

16. (Currently Amended) A method ~~computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions for addressing problems associated with customer orders, comprising:~~

detecting one or more exceptions that disrupt completion of one or more purchasing transactions between transactional parties;

determining whether the detected exceptions correspond to a first type, a second different type or a third different type;

when the detected exceptions correspond to the first type, automatically resolving the disruption without querying the transactional parties;

when the detected exceptions correspond to the second type, causing an outbound querying communication to be sent to a purchasing one of the transactional parties proactively and independently of whether the purchasing transactional party has reported the disruption, the outbound querying communication indicating a plurality of selectable proposed solutions to the detected exceptions; and

when the detected exceptions correspond to the third type, establishing a real time collaboration session between the transactional parties proactively and independently of whether the transactional parties have reported the disruption.

~~receiving an order for delivery of a product placed by a customer;
initiating a workflow process to handle delivery of the product of the order;
monitoring the workflow process to detect any problems related to the delivery of the order;~~

~~notifying a human call center agent when a problem related to delivery of the product to the customer occurs during the processing of the order; and~~

~~before resolving the problem, proactively establishing a telephonic interaction between said human call center agent and the customer when the problem occurs to resolve the problem based at least in part on input of the customer.~~

17. (Currently Amended) The method ~~computer-readable medium~~ of Claim 16 wherein the outbound querying communication is sent manually ~~further comprising automatically fixing the problem and informing the customer of the problem and the solution before being contacted by the customer.~~

18. (Currently Amended) The method ~~computer-readable medium~~ of Claim 16 further wherein the outbound querying communication is sent automatically without involving a call center representative ~~comprising researching the problem, explaining the problem to the customer, and proposing a solution to the customer before being contacted by the customer.~~

19. (Currently Amended) The method ~~computer-readable medium~~ of Claim 16 further comprising initiating a web-based real time interaction session between the transactional parties when the detected exceptions correspond to the second type and proactively and independently of whether the transactional parties have reported the disruption ~~further comprising establishing a collaboration session between representatives of the customer and the seller to resolve the problem.~~

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A proactive call center system comprising:
an interface to receive ~~which receives~~ an order for delivery of a product placed by a customer on-line;

a server for executing a workflow process coupled to the interface that executes the order for delivering the product to the customer;

logic coupled to the server which monitors the workflow process to detect any problems that disrupt ~~which may occur related to the~~ delivery of the order;

a communications device coupled to the logic and configured to send a notification to ~~which notifies~~ a human call center agent responsive to the logic detecting the problems and proactively and independently of whether the customer has reported the problems, the notification including contact information for the customer ~~when a problem related to delivery of the product to the customer occurs during the processing of the order; and~~

a call center coupled to the communications device ~~for~~ configured for use by a human call center agent to proactively establishing a telephonic interaction with ~~between the human call center agent and the customer~~ responsive to the notification ~~before resolving the problem when the problem occurs to resolve the problem based at least in part on input of the customer.~~

23. (Currently Amended) The proactive call center system of Claim 22, further comprising memory storing triggering software operable to automatically establish a telephonic connection between the customer and the human call center agent responsive to an acknowledgement of the notification by the human call center agent ~~wherein the human call center agent automatically fixes the problem and informs the customer of the problem and the solution before being contacted by the customer.~~

24. (Currently Amended) The proactive call center system of Claim 22, further comprising a software application displaying an icon to be selected by the human call center agent for sending the acknowledgement ~~wherein the human call center agent researches the problem, explains the problem to the customer, and proposes a solution to the customer before being contacted by the customer.~~

25. (Currently Amended) The proactive call center of Claim 22 further comprising a telephone endpoint including circuitry configured to send the acknowledgement to the call center responsive to the human call center agent activating a single button or other switch located at an endpoint associated with the human call center agent ~~a collaboration system which establishes a collaboration session between representatives of the customer and the seller to resolve the problem.~~

26. (Cancelled)

27. (New) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the characteristics include whether the detected exceptions correspond to network failures, parts shortage, offer rejection and software malfunctions.

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the apparatus is further operable to determine that the detected exceptions correspond to the first type when an analysis indicates that the detected exceptions are caused by network failures or software malfunctions.

29. (New) The apparatus of claim 28 wherein the processors are further operable to determine that the detected exceptions correspond to the second type when an analysis indicates that the detected exceptions are caused by parts shortage.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the processors are further operable to determine that the detected exceptions correspond to the third type when an analysis indicates that the detected exceptions are caused by offer rejections.